



## **Homeland Security Grant Awarded to Claiborne County *\$750,000 to be used for EOC renovations***

**Port Gibson, Miss. (September 11, 2012)** – A \$750,000 grant has been awarded to Claiborne County for renovations to the Port Gibson-Claiborne County Emergency Operations Center. The grant was presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The grant is part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local, and community levels as part of a comprehensive national emergency management system. Funds will be used to renovate and repair the 27 year-old building, which has been abandoned since 2005. Renovations will include mold and mildew remediation in addition to new interior finishes, plumbing, wiring, HVAC and ductwork, fresh-water backup system and emergency back-up power generators.

“The renovation of our current EOC will aid in the improvement of emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting flexible, sustainable, secure, strategically located and fully interoperable EOC,” said Claiborne County Emergency Management Director Marvin Ratliff, Sr., “During normal operation, the EOC will be utilized as a training facility for state and local radiological and natural disaster courses. The Emergency Management Staff and E-911 Coordinator will be housed in this facility and perform their daily operations. A state-of-the-art communications and media center is one of our main focuses as part of this renovation.”

“During natural and man-made disasters, the EOC will be used as the operations center for all local government and private entities; such as Claiborne County Board of Supervisors, Mayor, Fire Chief (County/City), Police Chief, Sheriff, American Red Cross, only to name a few. All emergencies will be coordinated from this facility.”

“Effective homeland security involves not only having highly trained personnel available to respond to emergency situations, but also ensuring that we have the right

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equipment and facilities in place,” said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. “These funds will provide Claiborne County law enforcement and first responders with the state-of-the facility they need to effectively protect and serve the citizens of Port Gibson and surrounding areas.”

Ledbetter said the United States Department of Homeland Security has directed state Homeland Security affiliates to use the funding to enhance existing capabilities within individual states for responding to acts of domestic and international terrorism, use of weapons of mass destruction and biochemical agents.

The grant program is part of a federal plan for ‘All-Hazard’ response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic agents, fires and other emergencies.

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2012 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to [www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov).

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